



# GIPSA News

A newsletter for the employees of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

March 2008

## A 9,195% Increase?!

*Dave Shipman, Washington, DC*

You didn't read that wrong. In recent years, there has been an ENORMOUS upsurge in the amount of U.S. grain exported in containers.

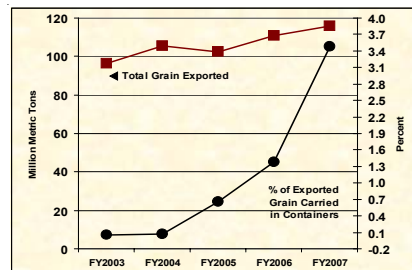
Exporting grain in containers used to be a relatively small-scale activity. In recent years, however, more and more containers filled with consumer goods have been arriving in the United States from Asia. What happens once they are emptied? Well, there's no sense sending them back empty when they could be filled with U.S. grain! U.S. grain exporters recognized this opportunity and are capitalizing on it. Our exporters are filling these available, affordable containers with U.S. grain and shipping them back to customers overseas.

Most containers used to ship grain are 20 feet long and loaded with 45,000 to 48,000 pounds of grain. Forty-foot containers carry 51,000 pounds. A typical load contains approximately 800 to 900 bushels of grain.

Containerized cargoes increased from 0.043 million metric tons (MMT), or 0.03 percent of total U.S. grain exports in 2002 compared to 4.401

MMT, or 3.2 percent of exports, in 2007.

The growth of this export industry has benefited many small and mid-size U.S. grain export companies that were not positioned to load and export grain in oceangoing vessels. It has also benefited customers of U.S. grain.



According to **Chuck Britton**, GIPSA's collateral duty officer in Asia, receivers at destination in Asia, which are mostly flour and feed mills, are very happy to have the opportunity to receive containerized grain shipments. "Containers allow smaller end users to buy directly from a supplier and have the containers arrive at their facility without having to deal with bulk vessels and large compa-

nies," **Chuck** reports. "I visited a feed mill in Cebu, Philippines, and the owner said how much simpler and efficient it is to receive feed grains, soy meal, and DDGS by container."

*Continued, see Containers on page 6.*

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# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Rodney Kent**, computer specialist, has joined the Application Development Branch of the Information Technology Staff in Washington, DC. He comes to GIPSA with over 22 years of government experience including, most recently, with the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. **Rodney** holds several Microsoft certifications including Microsoft Certified Trainer for .NET. **Rodney** and his wife of 22 years have 2 sons, age 18 and 20.

## RETIREMENTS

**Jim Ledoux**, agricultural commodity grader, Portland, retired on February 29, 2008, after 33 years of service within the official grain inspection and weighing system (3 years with the State of Oregon Department of Agriculture and 30 years with FGIS).

**Dave Olson**, agricultural commodity grader, Portland, retired on February 29, 2008. After 35 years of service with the official grain inspection and weighing system (5 years with the State of Oregon Department of Agriculture and 30 years with FGIS), **Dave** has decided that it is time for some well-deserved rest and relaxation with his family.

## CONDOLENCES

**JC Wooley**, shift supervisor, League City, passed away unexpectedly on February 27, 2008. **JC** spent many

years working in the grain industry before joining FGIS on March 13, 1977. While working with the League City, Texas Field Office, much of his time was assigned to Louis Dreyfus, Galena Park and Cargill, Channelview, FGIS laboratories.

## AWARDS

**Donna Ash**, Policy and Litigation Division, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for outstanding performance and increasing the program effectiveness and productivity of P&SP.

**Kenneth Critchfield**, Quality Assurance and Control Staff (QACS), FMD, received a performance award for exceptional leadership in managing the Wichita field office, thus contributing greatly to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of GIPSA.

**Janine Goodson**, Field Operations Support Staff (FOSS), Field Management Division (FMD), Kansas City, received a performance award for providing exceptional support services for the FGISonline system which contributed to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of FMD and GIPSA. **Janine** also received a spot award for providing timely customer support services for FGISonline projects during the absence of project managers.

**Anita Heckenbach**, QACS, received a performance award for providing exceptional quality assurance and quality control support to GIPSA personnel, official service providers, and customers.

**Juan Luevano**, Wichita Field Office, received a spot award for going beyond the call of duty by using his drafting program to draw floor plans for the Board of Appeals and Review/Grading Services Laboratory work area for the new National Grain Center.

**Barbara McKee**, Atlanta, received a spot award for dedication in performing day-to-day administrative support duties and extra effort in the processing of new employees' paperwork to ensure a smooth transition to GIPSA.

**Diane Palecek**, FOSS, FMD, received a performance award for providing exceptional management of the Inspection Data Warehouse FGISonline application, which contributed to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of FMD and GIPSA.

**Norma Phelps**, FMD, Washington, DC, received a performance award for outstanding performance and professionalism that contributed to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of FMD and GIPSA.

**Glenda Plautz**, Des Moines, received a time-off award for outstanding contributions in the efficient and effective management of the Midwestern Regional Office's Combined Federal Campaign, leading to Federal Building employees far exceeding their 2008 goal.

*Continued, see Names  
on page 3.*

# John Mott to Serve in Afghanistan

*John Barthel, Denver*

**John Mott**, economist, Western Regional Office, was deployed to Afghanistan on February 22, 2008, as a volunteer serving with the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service on a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). PRT's are combined units comprised of 60 to 100 military and civilian personnel who work with the Afghan people to help create a democratic society and a stronger market-based economy.

Military personnel provide security or PRT units. USDA personnel assigned to PRT teams provide agriculture expertise and assistance to the agricultural sector. Each PRT team has one USDA representative, which ensures that the person handles a broad array of agricultural issues. Past PRT projects included providing poultry flocks to families, rebuilding a farming systems research center, constructing a veterinary health center, and improving roads to facilitate transportation of agricultural products.

**John** will serve 1 year in Afghanistan. **John** closed a recent Western Regional Office staff meeting by requesting that he and others serving on the PRT's be in our thoughts and prayers. The WRO looks forward to his safe return in February 2009.

**Names**, from page 2.

**Denise Ruggles**, FOSS, Cedar Rapids, received an award for outstanding performance and professionalism which contributed to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of FMD and GIPSA. **Denise** also received a spot award for providing outstanding support in completing an accurate and correct FGIS operating budget.

**Regina Willis**, Atlanta, received a spot award for displaying dedication in performing day-to-day administrative support duties and extra effort in the processing of new employees' paperwork to ensure a smooth transition to GIPSA.

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## Issuances

*Terri Henry, Washington, DC*

- ☐ FGIS Directive 9181.4, "Protocol for Sampling and Testing Rice for the European Union," dated January 1, 2008
- ☐ FGIS Program Notice 08-02, "Replacement Parts for Rice Inspection Equipment," dated January 28, 2008
- ☐ FGIS Directive 9180.66 "Zearalenone Testing," dated February 4, 2008
- ☐ FGIS Program Notice 08-03, "Changes to Certification Procedures," dated February 6, 2008
- ☐ FGIS Directive 9170.13 "Uniform File Sample Retention System," dated February 25, 2008

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## Regulatory Info

*Tess Butler, Washington, DC*

### Federal Register Publications

- ☐ "United States Standards for Beans," published February 1, 2008
- ☐ "United States Standards for Whole Dry Peas, Split Peas, and Lentils," published February 1, 2008
- ☐ "Swine Contractors," published February 8, 2008
- ☐ "Weighing, Feed, and Swine Contractors," published February 11, 2008
- ☐ "Correction of the December 3, 2007, Federal Register Notice Announcing Opportunities for Designation in Georgia, Cedar Rapids (IA), and the Montana Areas, and Request for Comments on the Official Agencies Serving These Areas," published February 15, 2008
- ☐ "Opportunity to comment on the Applicants for Maryland, New Jersey, and New York," published February 15, 2008

## GIPSA AgLearn Helpdesk

*Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC*

To streamline the process for getting help with AgLearn issues, the GIPSA/MSS Training Office now has a dedicated phone number and email account to take your requests for assistance. Please use the new number or email address for any AgLearn issues you may have **except** ID's and passwords. (These issues must be handled by the eAuthentication Helpdesk at 1-800-457-3642; IT settings issues should continue to be directed to the GIPSA IT Helpdesk.)



## Grand Forks *Loves* Their Hearts

*Tom Wrenn, Grand Forks*

February 1, 2008, was National Wear Red Day. It is part of the American Heart Association's national Go Red for Women movement to wipe out heart disease, the number 1 killer of women. One in three women gets heart disease, and that number is simply too high.

What did the Grand Forks Field Office do? They wore red to support the American Heart Association's efforts to wipe out this disease.

The Grand Forks Field Office employees love their hearts.



*Seeing Red in Grand Forks. Pictured are (top row) Tom Wrenn, Penny Kilbride, Linda Simmons, Carmon Lindblad, and Fred Lindseth; and (bottom row) Ed Stallman, Valerie Hills, Mary Knutson, and Megan Johnson*

## IT Tidbit

*Joe Garrity, Washington, DC*

I know that I can sometimes sound like a broken record (does that phrase even apply any more?), but I can't stress how important it is to...

### TAKE YOUR IT SECURITY TRAINING!

This training not only strengthens our IT security, but is a requirement of all Federal government employees. Both the Cyber Security Awareness Training and Privacy Basics training keep users aware of the importance of our responsibilities in protecting our data, and the privacy of others.

Both courses are automatically entered into your AgLearn Learning Plan. Although the training must be completed by the end of this month, I urge you to complete it as soon as possible. If there is a problem with logging in to your AgLearn account, it is best to get it resolved right away.

KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO  
GOOD SECURITY.

**Are EEO/CR issues or  
concerns affecting your  
employment with GIPSA?  
Do you have questions?  
Need help? Then let your  
voice be heard.**

Call the EEO Advisory  
Committee at...

**1-800-639-5167**

**Civil Rights Hotline**



# GIPSA Sets Longevity Mark

*Brett Offutt, Washington, DC*



On February 24, 2008, GIPSA quietly set a new record for longevity in continuous administration of the Packers and Stockyards Act. That day marked 13 years, 4 months, and 5 days since GIPSA was established and authorized to administer and enforce the P&S Act. The previous record holder was the Packers and Stockyards Administration, which immediately preceded GIPSA, and which operated as an independent agency from June 17, 1981 until October 20, 1994. In third place, having administered the P&S Act for 12 years, from July 1, 1927 until July 1, 1939, was the Packers and Stockyards Division operating under the Bureau of Animal Industry.

In all, 14 different organizations have been delegated responsibility over the P&S Act since its enactment in 1921. There have been three separate Packers and Stockyards Administrations (1921-27, 1967-77, 1981-94); a Packers and Stockyards Division under a Livestock Branch (1945-53), as well as a Packers and Stockyards Branch under a Livestock Division (1953-1960). Packers and Stockyards has been part of a bureau, service, administration, branch, division, and office!

GIPSA's nearly 13.5 years are also longer than any single individual's tenure as agency head. That record is held by Dr. Arthur W. Miller, who served as chief of the Packers and Stockyards Division (Bureau of Ani-

Sometimes it's hard to see change and improvement. And sometimes it's difficult to give yourself credit for being the one who brought about that change. But take a look around. You'll see many improvements across GIPSA — thanks to you! You took the Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS) and told GIPSA you wanted some changes. And, you talked to your OAS Action Planning Teams, and they set your improvement ideas into action. In this, and similar articles that will follow in future editions of *GIPSA News*, we'll give you a little recap of some of the improvements we've seen — thanks to you!

You wanted...

- ✓ **New *in*GIPSA**
- ✓ **Suggestion Boxes**
- ✓ **P&SP Meeting Notes**
- ✓ **Town Hall Meetings**
- ✓ **New P&SP Award Process**

It's on the way! A Leadership Development Program team surveyed employees and recommended content. Software and an operating platform have been selected; and the redesign is underway!

They are in place and in use at all GIPSA offices. P&SP conference call and management team notes are now distributed.

FGIS held two all-employee Open Forum meetings in 2007, with more to come in 2008!

A P&SP team is reviewing and awards process in the program and formulating recommended improvements.

Is that all? Nope! I will highlight more results from the OAS in the coming months.

mal Industry) for more than 10 years, from January 1928 to November 1938. Miller was appointed by Secretary William Jardine and continued as the head of Packers and Stockyards under Secretaries Arthur Hyde and Henry Wallace. Dr. Miller was a rancher from central Kansas who came to USDA in 1901 and served continuously until his retirement in 1945.

## Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

Washington, DC personnel, call...  
1-800-222-0364

Field personnel, call...  
1-800-222-0364

In the past, he had to share bulk cargoes with many other people, had to meet barges at bulk unloading facilities, and never knew what product he might get after everyone else got their product out of the combined bulk shipment. By purchasing in containers, he gets a more uniform product.”

So, how is the growth of containerized shipping impacting us? As exporters handle more containers and exceed the 15,000-metric-ton exemption from mandatory export inspection, members of the national inspection system are stepping up to provide high quality service. Five years ago, there were only eight container loading facilities in the United States, all in the Pacific Northwest (PNW), where empty containers from Asia were abundant near export terminals. Most facilities shipped less than the 15,000-metric-ton inspection threshold, and required little in the way of official services. Today, there are more than 130 container loading facilities stretched from the PNW to America’s new container hub, Chicago, most of which are requiring our services.

We are providing official inspection services at 137 facilities, sampling grain as it moves from bin to container. Inspection of containerized cargo has increased from 0.3 percent of total grain inspected in 2005 to 1.5 percent of total grain inspected in 2007. We are ensuring that containerized grain is weighed on approved scales. GIPSA’s 8 scale specialists are testing platform scales at 123 loading facilities – only 34 scales were in operation in 2005. Field offices and the Compliance Division are working together to identify emerging facilities and ensure they are properly registered with us. Official

agencies are expanding inspection laboratory space and adding staffing to accommodate shippers’ inspection needs.

Another factor involved with container shipments, concerns phytosanitary certification. Most containers exported require a “phyto” certificate as well as a GIPSA inspection and weight certificate. We have partnered with APHIS to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in delivering phyto inspection services to the container business.

Through all of our actions to keep pace with this revolution in grain marketing, we are ensuring that we continue to fulfill our mission of facilitating the marketing of U.S. grain – in containers and otherwise!



*A container loading in California...*

*...and unloading in Malaysia.*



*Destination discharge grain is scooped off the ground by a front end loader.*

# For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC



## 5 Amazing Allergy Facts

1. Sensitive to Pollen? Wash your hair before bedtime. You will remove any pollen and keep it from settling on pillows and bedding. Avoid irritants such as tobacco smoke, automobile exhaust, hair spray and perfume; wash your hands frequently; plan outdoor activities when pollen counts are low.
2. The best time to take an antihistamine, which helps block allergic reactions, is before symptoms start. Some allergy medications can cause sleepiness. So, never take one when safety requires you to be alert. Ask your health care provider about antihistamines that cause less drowsiness.
3. Dust mites love to nest in area rugs and make you sneeze and itch. If you are allergic, place area rugs outdoors in direct sunlight for a few hours until they become warm and dry. Mites will dry up and die.
4. Moving to another location is no guarantee of allergy relief. People usually develop allergies to their new region's pollens and molds within a few years of moving. Most allergy-provoking grasses are widespread throughout the world.
5. As many as 20 percent of Americans believe they have a food allergy, but true food allergies are actually rare.

What most people consider food allergies are usually signs of digestive problems, food poisoning, or stress.

*Courtesy: TOPHEALTH: The Health & Wellness Newsletter*

## Travel Bits & Pieces

Monica Alexander, Washington, DC

**GovTrip Implementation.** The Agency will “go live” with the new, GovTrip e-travel system on March 10! The Agency is conducting training and essential tests on the system in preparation of the implementation.

Below is the status of the GovTrip Implementation:

11/7/2007	12/4-5/2007	01/18/2008	01/18/2008	01/22-25/2008
Official Launch	Business Process Meeting	TACT Table Updates	User Profile Updates	Federal Agency Travel Administrator (FATA) Training
02/08/2008	02/12-15/2008	02/26/2008	02/27-3/10/2008	03/10/2008
SF-1143 Due	Train-the-Trainer Kansas City, MO	IT Security Checks Due	Agency-wide Training	GovTrip “Go Live” date
Planned	Complete	Did not complete		

Contact **Monica Alexander**, GIPSA/MSS, with questions or concerns related to Federal government travel, at [monica.m.alexander@usda.gov](mailto:monica.m.alexander@usda.gov) or 202-720-7045.

**GIPSA News** is the employee newsletter of the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Send your news, ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, or thoughts for the next issue to:

### Dana Stewart

USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3614  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3614  
Phone (202) 720-5091  
FAX (202) 690-2333  
[dana.b.stewart@usda.gov](mailto:dana.b.stewart@usda.gov)

**by March 25, 2008!**

**Retiring?** To be included on our email distribution list after you retire from GIPSA, please send your email address to [dana.b.stewart@usda.gov](mailto:dana.b.stewart@usda.gov).

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR  
USDA, GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS  
AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION  
STOP 3601  
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20250-3601

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